Of Witches and Monsters, the Filth and the Fury: Two Australian Women's Post-Punk Autobiographies

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The last few years have seen an upsurge in punk and post-punk memoirs and autobiographies by musicians, in Australia and internationally, both women and men (Mark E. Smith, Morrissey, Viv Albertine, Tex Perkins, Kim Gordon, Steve Kilbey, to name just a few). Memoir and autobiography are thus contributing to the heightened visibility of the 1970s cultural movement of punk and its immediate aftermath, which has been a particular focus of academic study and of the broader processes of social memory, as in film, popular histories, documentaries, and oral histories. Such a retrospective turn is somewhat ironic considering punk's resolute anti-nostalgia and creed of no future, but also testament to punk's enduring influence as a repository of cultural and political hope, and the aging of a cohort. We are, then, in a time where the historical record of punk and post-punk is taking shape.

Most academic studies to date of punk and post-punk have been sociological (Hebdige), aesthetic (Ensminger), ethnographic (Hannerz), musicological (Dale), historical (Savage), or cultural studies-oriented accounts (Marcus), and importantly, there have been interventions made by feminist scholars that examine women's and girls' participation (Reddington, Leblanc, and Leonard, most notably). Being a music-centred culture, punk and post-punk's literary dimension is, understandably, a minor but productive focus,[1] and these studies capture the visual, the aural, the abrasive anti-establishment ethos of punk. Yet, with the recent emergence of memoir and autobiography, the culture is retrospectively gaining a literary identity, one that, by virtue of the significant (though small) presence of women authors, is also a gendered identity. As demonstrated in other musical genres, autobiographies expand understandings of music cultures and of autobiography, making connections between verbal and musical codes and forms, historical contexts and racial and sexual mythologies.[2]

Punk and post-punk memoir, by virtue of its written and reflective form, opens a different dimension to our knowledge and analysis of punk. As Robert Edgar, Fraser Mann, and Helen Pleasance explain, 'the partial, mutable, fragmentary and subjective nature of the past events being narrated' by memoir means that 'it subverts, challenges and critiques the fantasy of many other historical forms; that the past is unproblematically available to be re-created seamlessly, whole and intact as text. . . . It is an instability that challenges two dichotomies; that between fact and fiction and that between the creative and the critical' (4). This disruptive quality makes it an ideal form with which to narrate the disruptive cultural movement of punk and post-punk. However, partly because it is a nascent form, partly because of the critical neglect of the broader category of musical autobiography (Stein and Butler 115), scholarly attention to punk and post-punk autobiography and memoir is scarce, even though the genre's popularity, sense of authenticity and historical detail, accessibility, and destabilising potential, makes it a powerful element of punk and post-punk social memory.[3]

In what may be considered a contribution to a developing field of enquiry, I explore questions of gender, music, literary genre, and cultural context in two recent autobiographies by post-punk Australian women musicians: *Pleasure and Pain* by Chrissy Amphlett, lead singer of 1980s band Divinyls, and *The Naked Witch* by Fiona Horne, lead singer of 1990s band, Def

FX. I choose these two because, to the best of my knowledge, they are the only examples of Australian women's punk or post-punk memoirs thus far published (Kate Ceberano's *I'm Talking*, by virtue of her musical genres of funk and then jazz-pop, makes the text only tangentially related to punk and post-punk).[4] Amphlett's and Horne's are therefore vanguard texts by vanguard performers providing a rare and gendered remembrance of the putatively liberalised post-punk music scene.

When we consider the amount of Australian post-punk life writing by male musicians, and that in punk and post-punk, women were 'now being seen as equal performing members of a band, rather than just the foreground singer who left the creative decisions to the other, male members,' leading to increased women's participation throughout the 1980s (Groenewegen 27–28), this absence of women's accounts is surprising. It is even more surprising when we consider the number of autobiographies written by American and British women musicians (for instance, Albertine, Chrissie Hynde, Debbie Harry, Alice Bag, Kristen Hersh, and Rayya Elias), as well as the dispositions of women who played in Australian punk and new wave bands—strong, unique personalities, some tertiary educated, and quite a few who continue to move and work in creative spheres post-music.[5] The dearth of Australian women's punk and post-punk life writing can perhaps be partly explained by a perceived lack of marketability by Australian publishers. Indeed, Horne's book was canned by her first publisher for just this reason: 'The money guys at the [publishing] company said it wouldn't sell in "the minimum corporate mandate" because I wasn't famous enough and/or on TV anymore' (210). This suggests that although punk and post-punk wanted to change the music industry and its value systems—or at least attempted to open up a space for less commercially-oriented acts—such an intervention has not transferred into other cultural fields, at least for women performers. This context makes the publication of these two texts as a contribution to, and intervention into Australian rock music history, even more significant.

Divinyls formed in 1980 and continued until their eventual break in 2009, and were an exemplary post-punk Australian band, bridging hard rock, pop, and punk. As Amphlettt explains, Divinyls wanted to play 'full-on rock and [to] embody the anger and refusal to compromise that typified the punk ethos' (78). With her wild stage presence and fierce singing style, Amphlett can be seen as Australia's first, and arguably ultimate, rock chick: 'astounding or bewildering audiences with her displays of school uniform-class bump'n'grind burlesque, unrestrained sexuality and animal grace' (McFarlane 137**)**. Def FX started in 1990 before splitting up in 1997, and took Australian indie music in a new direction away from the conventional set up of guitars and drums as core. Instead, as Horne describes, they were 'a hard-rock band that was backed by programmed dance beats rather than a drummer' (61). And Horne, like Amphlett, was also an uncompromising and unconventional woman lead singer, performing a similarly assertive and confident sexuality (McFarlane 130), and utilising an anti-melodic vocal style to work with and against the industrial sound of the band's instruments. Both bands achieved considerable commercial and critical success in Australia and a degree of international recognition.

The nature of the intersections between the putative liberations for women afforded by punk and post-punk music, and autobiography as a textual performance of the self are the focus of this essay. I use the term autobiography rather than the more capacious life writing, as autobiography's classic definition accurately describes Amphlett's and Horne's project: to narrate the course of the narrator's whole life in retrospect (Smith and Watson 1, 3).[6] The focus on Amphlett and Horne also enables me to address questions of national context. Regardless of Australian rock music's location in a globalised industry and genre (Turner 12–13), rock music

has been critical to the construction of national mythologies of place and identity, as in the macho, sexist, pub scene associated with 1980s 'Oz rock' (Homan 23–24), or in the figure of the convict in early punk music (Encarnacao 200). And making this analysis timely is that a specifically Australian version of punk and post-punk social memory is currently taking shape as part of an early twenty-first century revisiting of the 1970s and 1980s occurring in Australian popular culture.[7] This memorialisation is complemented by the production of a general and nonacademic Australian rock and pop music history (*Molly*; *Glad All Over: The Countdown Years*; *A Long Way to the Top*) in which women's place is relatively marginal. Given the current context, this essay aims to be an intervention that addresses the gendered nature of both punk and post-punk so that women's participation in them are not left out of the myths, legends, and academic studies emerging, and that the textuality of musicians' life writing is addressed rather than interpreted as a transparent transposition of a life in music into words and narrative.

I use punk and post-punk to refer to the music cultures or scenes dating from the mid-1970s through to and ending with riot grrl in the mid-1990s that were characterised by an anti-rock music establishment/industry stance—whether real or imagined, achieved or failed. As one consequence, we have the category of indie music (indie being shorthand for independent of the mainstream popular music industry and its styles), a more politically oppositional term than its watered down relative, alternative music. (Of course, a number of performers start as indie then attain mainstream success, suggesting the leakiness of these distinctions.)[8] So punk and post-punk are primarily ethos/ideologically based categories, and secondarily, temporal. Simon Reynolds argues that punk had 'a long aftermath,' particularly in the form of 1980s new wave music (xii)—punk's immediate successor—and that punk was an 'uncompleted musical revolution' (1), continuing beyond new wave (erupting again, I would argue, in riot grrl). While Divinyls were part of Australian new wave music, in both my examples, a debt to and connection with punk is explicitly expressed (to which I return). I will therefore use the term post-punk to make explicit this allegiance and historical location.

The long aftermath of punk is evident in the thematics and codes used by both autobiographies to tell the female post-punk musicians's life. In an echo of Julian Temple's ferocious documentary on the Sex Pistols, *The Filth and the Fury*, I draw on the characteristically punk thematics of filth and fury as a frame of analysis with which to read these narratives of post-punk women in rock. While quite different texts, both write of matter (and gender) out of place, which enables these autobiographies to narrate the rejection of, and consequent sense of monstrosity in relation to, conventional Australian femininity and the rock industry. Filth, in terms of abject and excessive elements, personae, and processes characterising the punk self and sensibility, and fury, as this subject's central type of affect, are means to articulate the making and unmaking of the female musician's self as monstrous—culminating in her eventual disaster (and to some extent, her remaking in a less monstrous form).

Analogous to their stage work, Amphlett's and Horne's textual selves recruit and exploit a typically masculine set of codes to perform a novel subject of music: the female post-punk singer. Both Amphlett and Horne thereby write in a fraught space—an industry just starting to admit women in less conventional terms—to write a liminal self: one partly created by myths—some self-created, others externally imposed. Moreover, these autobiographies, as Simon Frith suggests good rock biographies should do, also attempt to 'treat the myth at the heart of the life' (276). Before detailing the filth and the fury making and unmaking the post-punk female singer, I provide a brief synopsis of both autobiographies, and discuss another context necessary for reading them.

Unlike 'the foregrounding of artifice and the intrusive presence of an uncertain author' characterising a number of post-punk memoirs examined in the *Music, Memory, and Memoir* collection (Edgar, Mann, and Pleasance 4), both *Pleasure and Pain* and *The Naked Witch* are formally conventional. Amphlett and Horne utilise a chronological narrative structure, unproblematised first persona narration, and realist codes that describe an upbringing in post-World War II lower-middle-class suburban Australia and life in the rock music and broader culture industries, thus framing them as personal contributions to social history. They begin with childhood, describe the importance of the family to the making of the future self, before detailing their adolescence, career in bands and rock bohemia, the downfall of the band, the gradual unravelling of the self due to substance abuse, followed by recovery, and culminating with the voice of the present day, narrating self. They therefore conform to a life writing sub-genre Oliver Lovesey terms 'rock 'n' recovery autobiographies,' which are centred on 'a celebrity career trajectory of conspicuous excess leading to illness' (297). Amphlett's autobiography is a collaboration with the prolific ghost writer, Larry Writer, and, I would add, with the voices of friends and family interspersed throughout, while Horne uses intertexts from the media to help narrate her story.[9] Both texts feature numerous photographs, including childhood shots but with an emphasis on the adult in public and private moments. These photographs, by contributing to the dialectic of celebrity identified by Richard Dyer—ordinariness and the extraordinary, and the private and public selves—produce intimacy and authenticity for the reader, and what Matthew Sutton describes as an 'index of success and longevity . . . authenticat[ing] the accompanying text by illustrating the subject's career advancement' (213). They also work to frame the texts as historical documents, giving us a visual sense of their Australian post-war childhoods and adult fame.

These texts should also be read as being at the intersection of autobiographical form with punk rebellion. While the last few decades have seen the reconfiguration of autobiography to accommodate selves other than the ideal/ised masculine 'I' of classical Western autobiography, so much so that autobiography is now a preeminent form for marginal and/or minority subjects, Barbara Johnson's early feminist theorisation of autobiography in the essay 'My Monster/My Self' remains highly pertinent to Amphlett's and Horne's negotiations of post-punk autobiography. Johnson argues that 'the monstrousness of selfhood is intimately embedded with the question of female autobiography' (10): how can the contradictions—largely repressed—of female selfhood be represented? She contends that 'The problem for the female autobiographer is, on the one hand, to resist the pressure of masculine autobiography as the only literary genre available for her enterprise, and, on the other, to describe a difficulty in conforming to a female ideal which is largely a fantasy of the masculine, not the feminine, imagination' (10). Considering that the broader genre of rock autobiography is currently male-dominated, and the rock music industry is male-controlled and similarly male-dominated[10]—particularly in the era that Amphlett and Horne narrate—a hegemonic masculine imaginary results, with consequences for our autobiographers (and the reader too).

These novel autobiographical subjects are outsiders in multiple senses, and thus are potentially unreadable, or compromised writing subjects. As women they are outsiders to the conventional version of literary genre and to the rock music industry; as women they are marginal within their underground culture; and, given that punk was an assault on the dominant gender codes (as was the contemporaneous women's movement), as women punks and post-punks they are outsiders to conventional femininities. This outsider status is further intensified when we consider that, as Simon Reynolds and Joy Press argue, women punks were even more transgressive than the boy punks, for boy punks 'have clearly defined trajectories [of rebellion] (e.g. the beats/Jim Morrison/Iggy Pop/Nick Cave lineage)' (230).[11] For the first time in popular

music history women within a musical subculture, rather than one female star (such as Janis Joplin), took on the persona of the rebel; women formed bands and played instruments; moreover, women's and girls' version of punk rebellion was spectacularly confrontational (Daugherty 30). As I go on to demonstrate, Johnson's identification of a female monstrosity is rehearsed in these texts as both diagnosis of the woman musician's position, and as a solution. The codes of punk culture—filth, fury, and monstrosity—emerge in both texts as the codes of these women's autobiographical performance.

The chaotic, abrasive sounds used by punk music as part of its rejection of respectable, mainstream consumer capitalist society were materialised in the punk's body primarily through the elements of filth and fury: the same system's excess embodied and made spectacular rather than denied and cast off. Punk style (hairstyles, clothing, bodily comportment and movement) was about filth—-punk's predilection for the sordid and the abject observed by Dick Hebdige (107–08). Filth is a specifically punk version of dirt, eloquently defined by Mary Douglas as 'matter out of place' (36): 'Dirt offends against order' (2). Similarly, fury—a more intense version of punk's 'key affective tenor' of anger (Brown 457)—was punk's disorderly and disordered mode of address to the system, whether in emotions, words, behaviour, playing styles, or vocalisation. Fury takes a specifically punk and gendered musical form in the scream. Joanne Gottlieb and Gayle Wald, among others, interpret the use of the scream by women punk singers as a tool to vocalise the constraints of conventional femininity—'a shocking juxtaposition of sex and rage' (359). Punk therefore scrambles the codes of rock music, straight society, and hegemonic gender, making possible the expression of a non-conformist femininity.

Although Amphlett's and Horne's musical and historical location is largely post-punk, they draw upon the codes of punk to make the rock music autobiography inhabitable by them and legible—to proclaim their outsider status, to signal their location within and inspiration by and origins in Australian punk culture, and to be readable by the punk and post-punk reader. Such a strategy aligns with the life writing of other 'eccentric subjects' who use both hegemonic and counterhegemonic codes to perform a resistant self: they 'occupy an "I" and in doing so scramble the boundary markers delimiting the sites of the included and the excluded' (Smith, 'Performativity' 31)—of the self, of autobiography, of music history in the case of Amphlett and Horne. Their punk locus is explicitly described in certain scenes and stated in both works: Horne's second band is 'an all-girl punk band called the Mothers . . . as in child bearers, and also The Mothers as motherfuckers' (Horne 51); Amphlett reflects: 'Luckily, punk, a movement that encouraged outrageousness and attitude, happened along. Punk made a lot of things possible' (65). They are the women and autobiographies that punk made and unmade.

Amphlett and Horne take a recurrent narrative of rock music memoir and writing, whether punk or otherwise, that I term as 'adventures in rock.' Its antecedents in the narrative of the quest for worldly success, the specific cultural industry it describes, and the nature of its protagonists and narrative kernels and satellites make it a masculine structure. It centres on young men starting a band and trying to make it in the industry, with colourful, excessive, and pleasurable digressions along the way—the sex, grog, and drugs bits, until a form of transcendence is offered as narrative closure and a separation from the past recounted. This might be recovery from addiction, the attainment of mature wisdom, or finding a soul mate, for instance. Australian rock life writing, with its larrikin personae, has easily made this narrative its own (as in the second volume of Jimmy Barnes's memoir [2017], and Tex Perkins's [2017]), moulding and expanding it to suit local conditions.

Into this structure Amphlett and Horne insert the paradigmatically Australian punk and post-punk version of tragedy that I call 'the writing of the disaster' (though earlier Australian bands suffered similar fates). Clearly, this is a plot of heroic failure for either or both the band and the narrator that is centred on career ambition: the band attempting to make it, whether in Australia or overseas, and sacrificing body, soul/sanity, and sobriety along the way. It is the plot of the band's or the narrator's unmaking and is thereby an ideal vehicle for punk motifs of monstrosity, filth, and fury, as well as punk's sense of nihilism, as encapsulated in the slogan of 'no future.' This plot, with the key event being heroic, possibly pointless, defeat, has particularly masculine and Australian resonances: young men failing in music (often on foreign soil) harks back to Australian national mythologies of the Anzacs and even earlier stories of white explorers and pioneers/invaders, and to the Australian fondness for the underdog and the larrikin. Inserting a female adventurer, however, changes the ways in which the adventure of worldly ambition and the plot of failure can operate. The key events are superficially similar—our narrators play in a number of bands before setting up the one that makes them famous; they aim to make it big; the band attains success but unravels somewhere along the way; there is hedonism and excess, and the narrators attempt to emerge from the wreckage into a life post-the-band (and in Horne's case, experience further disaster). Yet what we see performed is a specifically feminine type of creative ambition (and failure) that is culturally perceived as monstrous, and therefore we see the costs to women musicians of working in a male dominated industry and masculine imaginary. 'All I ever wanted was to be a rock star' proclaims Amphlett, 'Everything else in my life, relationships, family, friends, came second' (57). Horne, post-Def FX, unselfconsciously explains that 'Now I was seeing the world as a stage I could possibly perform on solo—as the World's Favourite Witch' (113). As a consequence, the unmaking of the band plot is secondary to the unmaking of the narrator: unmade not only by the operations of the music and entertainment industries, but, as I show, by the demands of conventional post-World War Two Australian femininity. So that while we talk about an autobiography's ghost writer, there is another ghost writing occurring, namely, girlhood and adolescent experiences of this conventional femininity as haunting the adult text.

The monstrous outcomes of conventional Australian femininity and the rock industry are literalised in the self-declared personae of the monster for Amphlett, and the witch for Horne. These personae have strong connections with each narrator's reconstruction of their childhood, and are evidence of the characteristic that Smith observes of marginalised women's autobiography, in which women search for an identity that they can inhabit ('Self' 20–21), and of the shaming of non-conformists that recurs in contemporary Australian autobiography (Dalziell 13). Both narrators recall ordinary Australian suburban childhoods characterised by not belonging and being teased by other children—by virtue of physical appearance (gap teeth, big lips) and behaviours—Amphlett did speech and drama training, so her accent made her stand out in working-class Geelong: 'The kids were merciless about my cultured speaking tones and jealous that I'd been in the local paper for my ballet and performances with the Musical Comedy Company. They called me Donald Duck . . .' (17). Horne was crippled by low self-esteem, would mess up school tests on purpose, was a loner and introvert: 'I also purposely did badly in school so I wouldn't get picked on, and in an attempt to be liked I did dumb stunts like climbing from one classroom window into another classroom window' (24).

In addition, their families—and particularly the father—were problematic. Amphlett's father, while loving, was very conservative—'He was constantly trying to control me, and I would never, *will never*, be controlled' (19). In contrast, Horne was adopted and seemingly unwanted by her adopted family: her father commented to her, 'you should have been put in a bucket' (25), and she was repeatedly sexually abused by her grandfather from a young age. They are

both unconventional and creative girls: Amphlett is theatrical, Horne is a loner who spends time in the bush as a proto-pagan: 'And it was in the (then) densely forested southern Sydney suburban bush that I had my first tangible, magickal experiences' (25). Adolescence only intensifies the sense of not belonging as they attempt to conform to the expectations of Australian teenage heterosexuality, which is portrayed in degrading, deadpan terms: for instance, Horne's first experience of sex: 'He couldn't get it all the way in because I was a virgin. After that he took me to Kentucky Fried Chicken. I remember really enjoying the chicken' (33). Though they attempt to fit in with their surrounding youth cultures, both remain aliens, and their rebelliousness and risk-taking increases (sex, drugs, poor school performance). Amphlett is even driven out of town by the police: 'I was told it would be in my, and Geelong's, best interests if I left town' (29).

Once away from the family home they can express their nonconformism through their adventures in various bohemian scenes and places—Europe and Melbourne for Amphlett, inner-city Sydney for Horne. Here, and throughout their childhoods, the recollections are described in unsensationalised terms, as if the small (and large) cruelties experienced by both because of their unconventional version of femininity, and often inflicted by boys and men, is simply to be expected. Horne returns one day to her bush cave to find it destroyed and defaced by teenage boys: 'there was horrible graffiti of penises and swear words scraped into the rock with powdery shale' (32). Amphlett recalls how 'It amused Darryl [Cotton] to creep up on me at the little flat both bands shared and rub a large plastic penis in my face. I was so intimidated by these people that I just sat there, unprotesting, as he denigrated me' (33). The penis is weaponised, to police by defiling these unruly young women. Not surprisingly, the childhood and young woman's past is absent of any nostalgia.

These pasts and the narrators' later affiliation with punk culture make it apt that they embrace monstrous personae for, as Jeffrey Cohen explains, monsters 'are disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration. . . . . The monster is difference made flesh, come to dwell among us,' repellent and attractive (6–7, 17). The witch persona, Horne's specific type of monster, is a similarly disturbing and powerful figure:

> The stereotype witch is an independent adult woman who does not conform to the male idea of proper female behaviour. She is assertive; she does not require or give love (though she may enchant); she does not nurture men or children, nor care for the weak. She has the power of words—to defend herself or to curse. . . . The identification of any woman as a witch will, therefore, set against her not only males, but also conforming females and their children. (Larner 84–85)

As adult monsters Amphlett and Horne are either explicitly or unconsciously acknowledging their younger identities of not being proper girls and teenagers—ones who troubled those categories of conventional femininity and who appeared physically, intellectually, and behaviourally excessive. Their success in music through the adoption of the monster persona allows a form of revenge on this past. Amphlett recalls seeing in the audience a group of surfers from Geelong who had been cruel to her teenage self:

> Their names were Fledge, Boong and Brew and they couldn't believe that the crazy little person from the beach had transformed into this rock star in a school uniform going berserk up on stage. I could see I scared them. After a blistering

> set, I stood there sweating, triumphant, as the crowd went wild, and I looked down at then and yelled, 'Now go and get fucked!' (23)

Moreover, the monster figure is a coping mechanism for the narrator's fraught position in the rock industry: an industry that attempts to control and commodify female rebellion in the figure of the 'bad girl.' Thus, when Horne's career with Def FX takes off, she becomes increasingly interested in the New Age goddess movement and witchcraft, a return to her childhood peace in the bush. 'Sincere connections with other girls doing what I did were rare, and this forced me to seek out alternatives to the male dominated industry I existed in' (68). Horne's witchcraft is an expression of self and a performance strategy informing costumes, lyrics, stage movement (69), which allows her to triumph over her past and present: 'No matter how tired I was, how unsupported I felt, I would get onstage and everything made sense. It was a role so very different from the reclusive, shy girl of my childhood' (70).

Similarly, Amphlett draws on the monster as a strategy to deal with her shyness and being on stage. She comments that 'I needed something I could hide behind that would free me to let loose. . . . As the eighties got underway, Australia needed a monster, and I decided I could be it. . . . I put together an outfit that would help unleash that monster' (103–04), namely, her infamous schoolgirl uniform (that draws upon the schoolboy outfit worn by Angus Young, guitarist in AC/DC). The monstrous schoolgirl is another instance of revenge upon being called 'jail-bait' by the Torquay surfers of her youth, with such an outfit—the sexualised delinquent—eliciting Aussie blokes' illicit desires. Like Horne's witch, the monstrous schoolgirl becomes her fortress, her anti-decorative and fear-inspiring objecthood in the masculine beer barns of Australia in the 1980s where the Divinyls played repeatedly, venues that were critical to the construction of Oz Rock (Johnson 133–34; Homan 23–24). As the above comments suggest, both women revel in these personae, as monstrosity enables a liberating reclamation of their otherness and an agentic performance of the contradictions they face (and faced as girls). The monster in the text—a highly powerful rock counter-icon for women—shows what has and hasn't changed for girls and for women in rock.

If these monstrous personae allow access to the powers of horror, to allude to Julia Kristeva's seminal work on abjection—to acknowledge and inhabit the myth of monstrous femininity they have been marked by, rather than deny or be shamed by it—the texts are characterised by complementary repertoires of abject elements. Kristeva defines the abject as that which 'disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules' (4). These elements are deemed by a culture as the unclean, the impure, or filth, to use punk parlance—for example, semen, saliva, urine, and menstrual fluid; they are elements that trouble the boundaries of the body, the self, and hence identity, threatening dissolution (3–4). Both autobiographies, in their emphasis on excessive drug and alcohol use, and extreme physical and psychological states (often a consequence of this excess), mean that they narrate and are constructed by a feminine form of filth, which is counter to both the glamorous image of women rock and pop singers and the industry-approved, highly sexualised 'bad girl.' Our narrators drink heavily and take copious amounts of drugs to bring on an undoing of the self—is this an undoing or nourishing of the monster—I suggest both. Both autobiographies show that this excessive consumption leads to a breach in the self's physical and psychical boundaries. There are a number of incidents where Amphlett vomits at inopportune moments—before a gig, in limousines, at a business dinner with record company executives, on the floor of a friend's house: 'My stomach was convulsing uncontrollably, just like John Hurt's in *Alien* before the monster bursts out' (248).

Horne has psychotic episodes and uncontrollable shivering and urge to urinate from sustained intravenous drug use, and as another consequence, temporarily loses her sense of sight and smell (46–49). Amphlett makes a brief aside to comment on the rock rumour of whether or not she urinated on stage, and recounts being spat on by a member of the audience. Similarly, Horne wakes up after a bender with a hurt jaw, blood smeared on her, uncertain if she'd been raped (172). She suffers tinnitus from the excessive noise levels of the band—done on purpose by fellow band members: 'Marty said: "Sorry, Fi, all those years you asked us to turn it down, we turned it up to fuck with you"' (72). And as throughout Western history, Horne's practising of witchcraft and paganism are indirect expressions of filth: illegitimate, non-Christian, non-scientific, and feminine subaltern knowledges. These adventures in filth, narrated matter of factly, amorally, and repeatedly, thereby threaten to dissolve the conventional autobiographical subject and its coherent boundaries of mind and body, and to trouble the proper identity for the hard-living rock music performer, and for the female rock musician. And the repeated, often self-inflicted harm can be interpreted as a sign of the threat to the narrator's psychic and bodily integrity by the music industry. One drinks and take drugs as part of, and escape from, the industry, and to channel the monster to survive.

The final element in the writing of the disaster of the post-punk woman musician is anger, indeed, fury. Anger, let alone fury, is a particularly transgressive emotion for women: Neil Nehring notes that anger is 'the only emotion deemed more appropriate in men' (122), while Julia LeSage observes: 'In the sphere of cultural production there are few dominant ideological forms that allow us even to think "women's rage" in any positive way' (qtd. in Nehring 122). Punk, and these autobiographies, however, are good places to start. Fury was central to punk in sonic (the wall of noise approach), visual (the dissonance of collage), verbal (yelling obscenities), and behavioural terms (fighting, assaulting performers, and pogo-ing). With one of punk's origins being the social and economic decline of the early 1970s, fury was the expression of punk negation addressed to the rock industry, consumer capitalism, and the respectable middle class. And it was a form of creative and pleasurable energy for punk women, as Brown demonstrates in her analysis of Poly Styrene and Annabella Lwin, and as we see in both autobiographies. Both *Pleasure and Pain* and *The Naked Witch* feature the narrator's fury either aurally, in the singing style or the band's sound; in her stage performance; in the narration of acts of physical violence during her off-stage adventures in rock; or anger verbalised or displaced in the text itself. And both autobiographies suggest the energetic and creative qualities of fury.

Like the monstrous personae on display, this fury has sources in their Australian girlhood, their band experiences, and in the broader Australian music industry. For Amphlett and Horne, their singing voices at certain moments unleash the scream—sheer, physicalised, de-aestheticised emotion—rather than melody, harmony, or vocal range. Such a technique is a major signifier of the female punk singer (think Poly Styrene)—an assault on musical form that is also a political critique of women's position in society and in language structures (Gottlieb and Wald).[12] 'After all, the female songstress is expected to wax lyrical even when she is pissed off' observes Jayna Brown (457). Horne describes her scream thus: 'I would throw back my head and howl—all the smothered screams of my childhood gushing out of me as the crowd screamed, echoing them back to me. It was fucking awesome' (69–70). Fury is also corporealised via correspondingly discordant stage movements—an extreme, unfeminine, and sometimes unsexy form of physicality. Horne recalls the pleasure of jumping into the audience to crowd surf the room, and of berating hecklers: 'Hecklers who cried "Show us your tits!" were met with "I will if you show me your dick! Wanna borrow my tweezers to find it?"' (69). Amphlett would jump on the back of the guitarist, or kick the roadies in the backside, or jump

on the bouncers if they were bullying fans (133). 'As that aggressive, seen-and-done-it-all and very well-developed schoolgirl from the bad side of town,' she explains, 'I could rebel against my straight, middle-class girlhood, against the prospect of life married to a TV newsreader' (106). And off stage she was prone to fisticuffs as a way of having a lover's quarrel. Fury meets physical violence to shatter the industry's version of the 'bad girl.'

Fury, however, takes a surprising detour in the second half of *The Naked Witch*. There is a strange shift in tone and register about halfway through, in which the text moves from conventional autobiography into more of a self-help text, with the final few pages even offering life lessons to the reader. Such a move appears as if a textual form of therapy is occurring to overcome Horne's sense of career failure and continuing lack of self-esteem traced to her childhood, as she narrates the later part of her life in explicitly therapeutic terms. 'I continue to forge a new life. At the time of writing I have just completed my first mission to Haiti—I am honouring the God of my understanding, in doing this service work' (200). Such a typically feminine genre and gesture (wanting to help others) I argue is an index of her rage and vulnerability, as are both texts' emphasis on incidents of self-destructive filth. Better to displace this rage into a more constructive, indeed selfless, narrative, than to continually confess to the disaster of the self, as Amphlett's text does. Regardless of this divergence, both texts share a less spectacular, but barely suppressed rage below the surface, as the narrators recall financial debacles, mismanagement, band break ups, heartache, the humiliation of scratching a living in or after the band, and other career disasters, unmaking mythologies of rock fame and glamour.

Although both autobiographies end with the narrator emerging from the wreckage with peaceful self-acceptance (self-acceptance being indicative of women's position in rock), and sobriety rather than transcendence, there is no recantation of the adventure in rock music, no recovery-type puritanism—even though both go into recovery, and no retreatism into conventional femininity or maternalism. Horne ends up being a pilot doing humanitarian work, while Amphlett emerges happily married and debt free after playing Judy Garland on the stage—how uncanny! Being narratives of unconventional women's passionate ambition, putative failure, and hence of a performed deep pain, and set in a time when parts of Australian rock music were attempting to operate along different lines, these autobiographies are complicating additions to the collective memories being forged of post-punk music, and the broader national story that is also being produced. The codes of filth, fury, and monstrosity delineate the post-punk woman musician as outsider to and survivor, rather than simply a victim of, her suburban Australian girlhood and adolescence, as well as configuring her way to the top of music, and then back down. Johnny Rotten's closing words to the audience at the Sex Pistols final performance: 'Ever get the feeling you've just been cheated?' are apposite to both autobiographies, but then, so is Amphlett's final sentence: 'Just don't ask me to apologise'(334).

NOTES

[1] The following provide excellent studies of New York punk's literary dimensions: Daniel Kane, Brandon Stosuy, and Bernard Gendron.

[2] See, for instance, Daniel Stein's analysis of jazz musicians' autobiographies.

[3] Edgar, Mann, and Pleasance's edited collection, *Music, Memory and Memoir* is an important exception, containing a number of essays analysing punk and post-punk memoirs.

[4] There are accounts by other women in the punk music scene, such Nikki McWatters's groupie confession, *One Way or Another: The Story of a Girl who Loved Rock Stars*, and the band booking agent, Dolores San Miguel's *The Ballroom*. These are both insightful accounts of the scene, but my focus on musicians makes them outside the scope of this essay.

[5] Brief reminiscences by Australian women punk and post-punk musicians, Jules Taylor, Karen Ansel, and Cathy McQuade, are included in the edited collection, *Urban Australia and Post-Punk Exploring Dogs in Space*. Their unromantic and off-centre version of the punk past suggests the difference of view provided by women's recollections.

[6] Note also that the cover of Horne's *The Naked Witch* features the subtitle 'An Autobiography.'

[7] This revisiting occurs across cultural forms: the memoirs of Mark Seymour and Robert Forster; the television mini-series *Paper Giants: The Birth of Cleo* and *Paper Giants: Magazine Wars*; the documentary, *The Go-Betweens: Right Here*; academic studies: *Cultural Seeds: Essays on the Work of Nick Cave*; and Nick Earls's novel, *The True Story of Butterfish*.

[8] See Marion Leonard's study for a detailed definition of indie (4–5).

[9] Writer, a journalist, has co-authored numerous sports autobiographies as well as published biographies and historical accounts.

[10] See Hack's (ABC Radio JJJ) most recent report into the Australian rock music industry, 'By the Numbers 2019.' For an even grimmer picture, and closer to the era of the Divinyls and Def FX, see Vicki Gordon's 1991 comments (qtd. in Johnson, 'Be' 129).

[11] Shayla Thiel-Stern gives a detailed account of the ways in which young women punks were constituted as a moral panic in the US.

[12] Yoko Ono was an earlier example of the screamer.

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